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ABSTRACT

The historical background and the current status of Swahili in Kenya and Tanzania, where it is designated as the national language, and in Uganda, where it has assumed a less prominent role, are described. Major factors contributing to the selection of national languages in the region are presented. The ways both linguistic and sociopolitical features influence a language's viability as the national language, especially in a heavily multilingual, multicultural setting are analyzed. The discussion focuses on the ongoing competition between languages in different domains and the complexity of language choice for individual speakers. Changes occurring in Swahili's internal development and patterns of use are also examined in this context. (MSE)

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Swahili as a National Language in East Africa

Marilyn Merritt and Mohamed H. Abdulaziz

In this paper we will describe some of the historical background and the current state of affairs regarding the status of Swahili, or perhaps more properly Kiswahili (using the prefixed form that is used when speaking the Swahili language), in East Africa. The geographical spread of Swahili as a *lingua franca* extends beyond East Africa and within Africa is second only to Arabic in terms of its range. However, as this is a book about national languages our main focus will be on Kenya and Tanzania, where Swahili is politically designated as the national language with a contrasting discussion of Uganda, where Swahili has assumed a somewhat less prominent role.

In describing the situation here, and noting contrasts within the region, we hope to provide some sense of the major factors that have contributed to the selection of national languages in this region which may be of general interest. We also hope to sharpen the concept of national language by illustrating both the linguistic and socio-political features that must obtain for a language variety in order for it to be *viable* as a national language, especially in a heavily multilingual and multi-cultural setting such as East Africa. Further, we hope to give some sense of the ongoing "competition" between languages in different domains and the concomitant complexity of language choice for individual speakers, although we can only hint at this

within the scope of this paper (see, e.g. Abdulaziz 1972, Parkin 1974). Finally, throughout our discussion we hope to convey some sense of the changes that have occurred with Swahili--not only in the patterns of its use, but also in its internal development as a dynamic language.

Historical Overview of East African Nationhood

The modern nation states of Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda all emerged in the 1960's, having gained independence from the colonial government of the United Kingdom. The land area of Kenya covers 224,960 square miles while Tanzania covers 363,708 square miles and Uganda 91,076 square miles. According to the U.N. World Population Chart of 1984 inhabitants number 19,761,000 in Kenya; 21,710,000 in Tanzania, and 15,150,000 in Uganda. All three countries access Lake Victoria, but while Uganda lies inland, both Kenya and Tanzania border the Indian Ocean.

The coastal area of East Africa had been for centuries in contact with successive waves of foreigners notably the Arabs, the Indians, and the Portuguese --but it was not until the late 19th century that outside political influences began to seriously penetrate the interior of this region, which was comprised of geographically diverse arid and lush areas, and inhabited by a number of culturally distinct groups. As in the past, trade and

exploration were the main pursuits. By the turn of the century, however, both Germany and Great Britain had established well-developed political interests and claims to the region; and plans were well underway for a modern railway system that would travel from the ancient city of Mombasa, on the Indian Ocean, to the shores of Lake Victoria and the wealthy African kingdom of Buganda.

Germany claimed the area south of a line just north of Mt. Kilimanjaro, which was called Tanganyika. Great Britain claimed the area just adjacent, stretching as far north as Somalia (then colonized by Italy). The need to build and administer the railroad led to the building of the city of Nairobi (conveniently located at a halfway point, and at the junction of the flat plains, where it was easy to build the roadbed, and the rich green highlands that could supply food) as well as the establishment of a colonial government.

After the First World War Tanganyika was ceded to Great Britain, and the whole territory under colonial government was often referred to as British East Africa (BEA). At the time of independence Tanganyika and the island of Zanzibar were consolidated to form the new nation of Tanzania. The boundary between Uganda and Kenya had been earlier drawn to facilitate Kenya's viability as an agriculturally based British colony (with

significant numbers of permanent British settlers who planned to make their homes there). Resident aliens at the time of independence were given the opportunity to become Kenyan citizens (?for Tanzania, Uganda). All three new nation states remained part of the British Commonwealth.

For some ten years following Independence in the early 1960's the three nations maintained a useful loose federation known as the East Africa Community. They shared administration of parts of the railroad, travel on Lake Victoria,common postal services, sharing of educational facilities at the University level and other features that were deemed to be of mutual economic interest. Political pressures caused this federation to break down in the mid-1970's, making national boundaries more salient than at any time in the past; since 1984, however, restrictions have decreased and it appears that a period of renewed cooperation is developing.

Overview of Linguistic Diversity as the Context for Swahili As A Regional Lingua Franca

Linguistically the boundaries dividing the three countries can be seen to be somewhat arbitrary. Along the borders there are often groups that share the same language and basic culture who are divided simply by a political boundary. This is especially true of the pastoral Maasai who occupy both sides of the Kenya-Tanzania border in the Serengeti plain. A similar

situation exists along the northern part of the Kenya-Uganda border. At the time that boundary was drawn, major consideration was given to the important kingdom of Baganda which was located entirely within Uganda.

In all three countries the internal linguistic diversity is great. Though precise figures for the number of languages in each country are not available, there are approximately forty in Kenya, more than one hundred in Tanzania, and over thirty in Uganda. Four major African language families--Bantu, Nilo-Saharan, Cushitic, and Khoison--are represented in the overall territory. Tanzania's languages come from all four language families, but more than 90% are from the Bantu family. In Kenya there are Bantu languages (including Kikuyu, Kamba, Luyia, Swahili), Nilo-Saharan languages (all from the Nilotic group, including Oholuo, Maa, and Kalenjin), and Cushitic languages (occurring mostly in the northeastern part of the country and including Somali and Rendille). Among the inhabitants about two-thirds speak Bantu mother-tongues, while nearly one third speak Nilotic mother-tongues. Two major language families are represented in Uganda. Bantu languages (including most prominently Luganda) occur mostly in the southern part of the country, while Nilo-Saharan languages (mostly Nilotic such as Acholi and Lango, but including also Sudanic ones) are spoken in the north. This does not include, of course, the small pockets of languages imported from the Indian sub-continent with small

groups of traders who began to settle in East Africa over the past hundred years.

Historically, none of these languages has assumed dominance in terms of numbers of speakers. Today, with more than fifty million people inhabiting this entire region of East Africa, no single language has more than five million mother-tongue speakers.

In this context there are a number of obvious features about Swahili that have played a role in its development as an historically important lingua franca within the region. First, it is a Bantu language. Most inhabitants of the region speak a Bantu language as mother tongue; another Bantu language is easier for them to learn than a language from another group. Secondly, Swahili is spoken indigenously along the coast. For centuries this has been the East African language of contact for traders approaching from the Indian Ocean. Thirdly, long before the 19th century the culture of the people who first spoke this language (also called the Swahili) was urban and literate, and had incorporated the Islamic religion. This effectively meant that Swahili was more "developed" as a language, and more "open" to change and accommodation to cultural differences and innovations.

Brief History of the Swahili Language

The exact origin of the Swahili language is uncertain, but there are reports as early as the second century A.D. that there were indigenous urban trading settlements along the coast of the Indian Ocean, south of the horn of Africa. According to Whiteley (1969, p.31) "On present linguistic evidence...some form of Proto-Standard Swahili was being spoken on the coast before the tenth century." It seems likely that Swahili developed first in the north, in what is now Somalia, south of Mogadishu, near the Lamu archipelago and the Tana river estuary, and then spread south along the coast and off-shore islands.

When the island of Kilwa was visited by the Arabic traveller Ibn Batutu in 1332, he reported that there were native poets, who wrote lyric and epic poems in the Swahili language, using the Arabic script (Heine 1970). At that time Kilwa was the cultural center of the Zenj empire, which governed the coastal territory as far south as the Zambezi River and used Swahili as the lingua franca. As a major part of Arab and Persian influence, Islam seems to have become a part of the Swahili culture during the Zenji period, which spanned several centuries (from before the 10th century up to the late 15th century when Vasco da Gama appeared with his Portuguese fleet). This was a period of brisk competitive maritime trade among countries that accessed the Indian Ocean, particularly those that could use the monsoon trade winds to advantage. The Zenj "empire" itself seems to have

consisted largely of a set of city-states like Lamu and Mombasa that were situated on small islands or along the coast where there were heavy mangrove swamps that could provide a deterrent to swift invasion from the sea. Very maneuverable single-masted sailing ships called dhows were built from mangrove wood and used for most maritime transportation in the region. Together with more modern vessels dhows continue to be used today.

Exactly when and how the Swahili language and culture emerged is not clear. Western scholars in the early 20th century, citing the heavy influence of Arabic on the language and the evidence of settlement, intermarriage, and the spread of Islam from Arabia, put forward the idea that Swahili was a "mixed language," based on Arabic and Bantu, possibly a creolized trade language of the Indian Ocean.

This hypothesis is no longer considered valid. The Arabs came as traders rather than settlers. When they have stayed on the tendency has been to intermarry and to become quickly Swahilized. More importantly, there is no evidence within the language itself of creolization or reduced form. Swahili grammatical structure retains a fully elaborate Bantu morphology (including, for example, at least seven noun classes that are indicated by morphological prefixes, and that require concord with adjectives and subject and object markers within the verb), and its core vocabulary as well as its phonology is clearly

Bantu. The only possible reduction is the lack of phonemic tone, which most other Bantu languages in East Africa do have. Moreover, even if this is a "loss" there is no need to postulate Arabic or foreign influence, as the surrounding non-Bantu languages from the region, such as Somali, are also non-tonal.

Arabic influence on the Swahili language seems limited almost entirely to the addition of literary genres and additions to the lexicon. Although some studies suggest that as much as 35% of the lexicon may be borrowed from other languages, mostly from Arabic, estimates go as high as 70% for the proportion of these borrowings that are related to Islam or Islamic education. Arabic is still taught in madrassas (Islamic primary schools) along the coast, though it is used now almost exclusively to study the Koran and religious documents.

It seems likely that in earlier times, among some of the population there existed a Swahili-Arabic bilingualism of a diglossic nature, with Arabic being used to discuss semantic domains such as theology, jurisprudence, rhetoric, and medieval science. This facilitated lexical borrowing for exactly those areas that were not part of the indigenous culture. Traditional semantic domains and genres were less likely to borrow new words. For example, the indigenous society has strong associations with the sea. As we might thus expect, vocabulary dealing with the sea is largely Bantu and comprises a significant portion of the

Swahili lexicon; further, some of the best proverbs (a traditional genre) are associated with the sea.

Swahili was used as a language of trade not only along the coast, but also when caravans were formed to go into the interior in search of ivory, animal skins, and, for a time, slaves. Most of these caravans went through the area that is now Tanzania, through land occupied by other Bantu-speaking groups. In Kenya the caravans had to traverse through territory occupied by the Maasai, who were Nilotic-speaking, and who were known for their fierce warriors. Swahili was less useful in negotiating with this group.

As a lingua franca over a period of several centuries Swahili has often been in a situation of diglossia, spoken by individuals who spoke Swahili in particular semantic or social domains, and who spoke at least one other language in other domains. This has led to continued borrowing into Swahili where new areas were introduced. A portion of the vocabulary for card playing, for example, is borrowed from Portuguese, reflecting the period of introduction. In recent years, many new words have been borrowed from English. Many terms for plants and animals have been taken from other African languages. All this has given the language a property of adaptability and elasticity which more culturally isolated languages do not have.

Colonial Influences On Regional Patterns of Language Use

The influences of the British and Germans began in the 19th century when their interest in trade and geographical exploration led them to go beyond the coastal region into the interior. This expansion of trade accelerated the spread of Swahili along these trade routes.

This spread was, however, not uniform throughout the region. Because Zanzibar had by this time become the major focus for trade (rather than ports further north) and because the routes through Tanganyika were less hazardous than those through the more northern Maasai-occupied land, the spread of Swahili during this early period was far more significant in Tanganyika than in Kenya or Uganda. In fact, because of the necessity to negotiate with the Maasai, caravans that took the northern route often brought interpreters who could speak Maa rather than rely on Swahili.

Trade and exploration also opened the region to missionaries who came in large numbers to spread Christianity, and the kingdom of Baganda became an early stronghold. Missionary interest was probably enhanced by the presence or recent presence of the slave trade. The British Royal Navy negotiated a protective treaty with Seyyid Said, the Sultan of Zanzibar, in exchange for his help in putting down the slave trade in the early 1800's.

Though the language policies of the British and the Germans differed, at first neither group made much effort to introduce English or German, or to in anyway change local patterns of language use. Much as they had done in India, the British administrators and missionary teachers set about learning the local languages as needed. In Tanganyika, under German control, interest in learning the indigenous languages was particularly strong. As the Christian missions penetrated into areas away from the trade routes (which was more likely in the British controlled territory) they found that Swahili was less well known. However, as colonial interests and involvements became stronger it became clear that there was a need to provide organization and administration across tribal boundaries and that policies would have to be set that would dictate the usage of local languages and lingua francas.

These language policies, based largely on the simple need to facilitate communication, had the most direct influence on changing regional patterns of language use. They involved basically two realms: organization and administration, and education.

Education in British territory was almost exclusively the province of the missionaries. Most of them favored the use of the local mother-tongues for teaching and translating the Bible. Their feeling was that the mother-tongue would be most likely to

capture the spirituality of the Biblical teachings. Though this was to some extent an impractical decision because of the number of different languages involved, they felt that Swahili was not a viable solution because of its long association with the Islamic religion. In Uganda and the western part of the territory there was also some negative association of Swahili with slave-trading.

In fact, when the United Missionary Conference was held in Nairobi in 1909 there was a debate over whether Swahili or English should become the lingua franca in which it was decided that English should become the lingua franca. The vernacular or mother-tongue was to be used for the first four years of school, with English being used after that. Swahili was still to be taught as a subject and used as a medium of instruction in some schools such as those in Nairobi. Educational policy thus did not assign much prestige or utility to Swahili in parts of the territory where it was not already widely used.

In Tanganyika, under German control, educational policy took a different turn. At first some schools tried to provide primary instruction in German, but when this produced almost uniform failure it was quickly given up. Because there were so many different language groups in Tanganyika, and perhaps also because the major urban concentration was along the coast in or around Dar es Salaam where Swahili was the mother-tongue, the decision was made to use Swahili in educational institutions.

This decision meant that books and teaching materials had to be prepared. Since the late 19th century, missionaries and other interested foreigners had begun to transliterate Swahili into Roman script and to systematize their knowledge of the language so that it could be taught to others. Though the indigenous Swahili culture was a literate one, this literacy was based exclusively on Swahili written in Arabic script. Roman scripted Swahili was being newly introduced, and met with considerable success. In 1914 the German Protestant Mission published its newspaper Pwani-na-Bara in Swahili with a circulation of about 2000.

Language policy with respect to organization and adminstration was less dissimilar between the two colonial powers. In building the railroads, both quickly adopted Swahili as the lingua franca. As administrative needs increased, Swahili continued to be used more and more.

However, in British controlled territory there were several large ethnolinguistic groups--notably the Ganda, the Luo, the Luyia, the Kikuyu, and the Kamba--whose languages were used at the district level. In contrast, in Tanganyika administrative political boundaries were such that a single local language was rarely available to be used. Further, the Germans took a greater interest in training local people to do administration and set

their educational policy in accordance with this need. Thus in Tanganyika Swahili quickly became known as both the language of learning and government employment, and acquired considerable prestige.

Another factor which no doubt played a role in the differing evolving roles for Swahili was that while the Germans maintained their administrative center in Dar es Salaam on the Swahili coast, the British soon moved their administrative center from coastal Mombasa to the more centrally located Nairobi, amongst the Kikuyu, the Maasai, and the Kamba. Swahili continued to develop as an important lingua franca, but in the absence of a local group who spoke it as a first language it began to assume the character of a sub-standard dialect, "up-country" Swahili.

In 1920 Kenya and Uganda became crown colonies of Great Britain and Tanganyika came under British control as well. During the 1920's there was a temporary convergence of educational policies in Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda, in which the British accorded Swahili more prominence than in the past, but this did not last.

In Tanganyika the British built on the German administrative and educational structure, but after they took over English was introduced in key domains and there was a resulting loss of prestige by Swahili. In primary schools Swahili was still used

as the medium of instruction, but for secondary schools it was English. Though the language of the lower courts was Swahili, the language of the higher courts was English. Newspapers continued to be published in Swahili, but the new, and therefore prestigious, media of glossy magazines and films were in English (or occasionally other foreign languages).

In Kenya, after the British takeover of Tanganyika, an effort was made to use more Swahili in certain areas, especially administratively. However, schools continued to be left largely in the hands of the missionaries, and the medium of instruction continued to be either mother-tongue or English. English was becoming more important in Kenya as Great Britain had made a decision to colonize there and had offered tracts of arable land to European settlers, especially British veterans of the First World War. Important political and administrative posts were thus held by the British, and it was not foreseen that this would change significantly in future years.

Swahili made inroads in particular areas. For example, it was made the language of the East African territorial army called the King's African Rifles and of the security forces. Further, trainees were sent from all parts of British East Africa to work in other areas. This promoted a tremendous regional identification, especially among the classes who contributed to these forces.

Also important was the fact that after World War I Tanganyika and the Swahili-speaking island of Zanzibar just off its coast had come under control of the same colonial power. With Great Britain governing of all of East Africa the idea of standardizing Swahili became practicable. In 1925 an education conference held in Dar es Salaam led to proposals for standardized spelling and the establishment of a Central Publishing Committee. In 1927, following the recommendation of the British Governor, Swahili was designated one of Uganda's official languages, giving it equal status with Luganda. Early the following year, 1928, the dialect of Zanzibar was officially adopted as the standard dialect of East Africa at an inter-- territorial conference held in Mombasa.

Regional convergence on the use of Swahili proved to be short-lived, however. Swahili's status as an official language in Uganda lasted only a year. The politically powerful Ganda mistrusted its rivalry with Luganda, the missionaries worried that it was Islamic in character, and some educators felt that it would retard modernization.

In Kenya Swahili speakers all used a dialect somewhat different from the Zanzibar dialect that had become the selected standard. The coastal speakers did not fully accept the Zanzibar standard (see,e.g., Khalid 1977), and disapproved of the up-country dialect that was growing in proportion to the

urbanization that was taking place in the center of the country. At some distance from the coastal mother-tongue speakers, this growth sector for Swahili was little influenced by the Swahili people and was used in formal contexts such as programs by the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation as well as for informal everyday encounters.

All this gave the use of Swahili in Kenya a different character and a different base than that in Tanganyika and Zanzibar. Whiteley's (1969) observation was that "if Swahili was the language of the country in Tanganyika, in Kenya it was the language of the towns, especially Nairobi, where people from all parts of the country found it a convenient bulwark against the loneliness of city life as well as a ready tool to exploit the attractions the city offered" (p. 67).

In the 1950's there were more Swahili newspapers published in Nairobi than in Dar es Salaam, but a sense of competition with mother-tongue languages was more keenly felt in somewhat the same way it was in Uganda. In Tanganyika, for example, the political party TANU adopted the use of Swahili with no problem. In Kenya, shortly before independence, the political party KANU initially proposed using Swahili all over the country and produced their party newspaper in it; at a later date, however, Luo, Kikuyu, and Kamba were also used.

By the close of the colonial era, English as well as Swahili had grown in stature. There was first of all its continued importance in international trade and in negotiating (notwithstanding the violence of the "emergency" period) political independence with Great Britain. In addition, universities had been set up where English was (and still is) the exclusive medium of instruction: Makarere University in Kampala, Uganda, the University of Dar es Salaam in Tanganyika, and the University of Nairobi in Kenya. The newly emerging African intellectuals were anxious to communicate with Africans outside the East African region and with the international intellectual community. East African authors such as James Ngugi (later to write under the name Ngugi wa Thiong'o) began to use the literary genre of the novel, written in English.

National Policies on Language Use

As with language policies during the colonial period the major two areas in which policy has been legislated concern political administration and education. As mass media has become more and more important, policy regarding dissemination of information through these channels has become another important area of language policy as well.

The first president of Tanzania, Julius Nyerere, actively encouraged the use of Swahili in all walks of life, including all spheres of government and politics. It is thus the "official"

language as well as the national language. In education Swahili is used as the medium of instruction all through elementary school, and English medium schools are not introduced until the secondary and tertiary levels. English maintains some status as co-official language, as it is also used at higher levels of government, especially in the judiciary and in dealing with international affairs. The print media of newspapers and magazines utilizes both Swahili and English, as does radio broadcasting. However, more Swahili is used, especially in broadcasting and other oral media. Another important government policy has been to set up a National Swahili Council which acts much like an academy of language, passing on any new publications and working to standardize the modernization of the language through the borrowing of needed terms and expressions.

In Kenya Swahili was proclaimed the national language as well, but this did not mean that it was to displace other languages in all affairs of national interest. A small committee of musicians, some British and some African, were commissioned to compose a national anthem with Swahili lyrics and an indigenous East African tune (which turned out to be a lullaby). Swahili continued as the language of the military. Swear-in ceremonies of government officials were to be carried out in Swahili only. But English was to be the "official" language, making it the language of Parliament and offices of national government. In 1974 Kenya's first president Jomo Kenyatta proclaimed that Swahili

should also be used in the Parliament. Since that time Members of Parliament have been required to know both Swahili and English in order to participate fully in debate. Monetary currency is marked in both Swahili and English.

With regard to education a Kenya Education Commission was set up in 1964 to study the situation and make recommendations for carrying out the educational needs of the country. The resulting report, often referred to as the Ominde report (so--called for the Chairman of the Commission) recommended that mother-tongues (and in linguistically mixed areas occasionally Swahili) be used for the first three standards, with Swahili and English taught as subjects, and that schools be English medium from standard four onwards, with Swahili continuing throughout the seven year curriculum as a required subject. Secondary and tertiatary education was to continue as English medium. In 1984 significant changes were made, introducing the "8-4-4" system. Elementary education was extended to eight standards with a shift in emphasis in curriculum, and with Swahili being tested at the end of this period, which was not previously emphasized. Additionally, though the secondary schools continue to use English as medium, Swahili has now been made a compulsory subject.

Print media is largely in English and Swahili. Television broadcasting is done only in English and Swahili, with the news being delivered in both languages at different times of day. On

the radio there are local broadcasts in some of the mother tongues, including Kikuyu, Kamba, Luyia, Luo, and Somali. Among some of the pastoral groups radio is a far more effective media than television or any of the print media. Broadcasting media are government controlled, whereas print media is not.

National efforts to research and develop the Swahili language have been undertaken, though they do not match the level of investment made by the Tanzanian government. In 1971 the University of Nairobi launched a Department of Linguistics and African Languages in which Swahili is taught. The National Council for Science and Technology has requested the preparation of an English-Swahili medical dictionary, which should be available by 1987. However, so far nothing approximating the institute of Swahili research discussed in the 1979-1983 National Five Year Plan has come about.

In Uganda it has never been possible to agree to the use of a single African language as <u>the</u> national language. Luganda, language of the historically politically powerful Ganda group, has long been used as a regional <u>lingua franca</u> and was designated one of six nationally recognized languages to be used in public education (along with Ateso/Akarimojong, Lugbara, Lwo (sometimes referred to as Dholuo), Runyankore/Rukiga, and Runyoro/Ruturo). Since the introduction of Swahili through traders and by the British organization of the King's African Rifles and the

territorial security forces, it has served as an important lingua franca in other areas. However, its association with the military--in particular with the generally less educated classes from which these forces were drawn--and the fact that Swahili is not a mother-tongue for any Ugandan group, has meant that it does not connote positive national identity. English has continued to play an important role both in government and in education. English probably enjoys a more secure status as lingua franca in Uganda than in either Kenya or Tanzania.

The Current status of Swahili in East Africa

Swahili is widely spoken today throughout East Africa. In addition to having been designated the national language of both Kenya and Tanzania, and being promulgated as a regional language in Uganda, it is also used in parts of Zaire and Rwanda and Burundi. As the political situation in Uganda has been extremely unstable and is only now (1986) beginning to be resolved, the policies there may change.

Swahili spread from the coastal area into the interior of East Africa through its use as a lingua franca in trade. It has continued to be the language of retail trade and commerce, especially in urban areas between people from different tribal backgrounds. Additionally, it was used early on to facilitate administrative undertakings, such as the building of railroads, and the organization of services at a non-local level. These

are instances of what Mazrui (1975) has called the organizational impetus for the spread of a lingua franca. This would seem to account for most of the initial spread of Swahili in the region. Once a language has been spread to a certain level, however, it becomes available for purposes other than those which may have initiated the spread. For example, the organizational potential of Swahili was exercised by the indigenous population in the Maji Rebellion of 1909, in which Tanganyikans rallied in a last military effort to oust the Germans.

Further, the fact of there being a language that is spoken beyond the bounds of one's mother tongue can give individuals a sense of belonging to a unit larger than the local political unit. This can lead to what Mazrui has called the inspirational thrust of a lingua franca, whereby people are motivated to learn and use a language in order to identify with what it stands for.

This inspirational thrust in the spread of Swahili did not take place until this century, and it occurred first in Tanzania where it was spoken longer by a more widely spread populace who had quickly grasped its organizational value. Often cited is the example of the five Chagga tribes, each with their own distinct dialect, who decided, in order to communicate equitably amongst themselves, to adopt Swahili as their lingua franca (Scotton 1978). Because of the German language policies (to use Swahili as the medium of instruction as much as possible) Swahili had become

closely associated with learning and education, and with economic opportunity through government employment as well as trade. Though it lost considerable prestige during the British colonial period, since independence and President Nyerere's policy of using Swahili throughout the government as well as in other spheres of life it has regained much of its previous level of prestige.

In Kenya Swahili is now often seen as symbolic of Africanness in contrast with English, which connotes to many too much of a cultural identification with the colonial period. At the same time, though, for some citizens, mostly from non-Bantu groups, Swahili is seen as more symbolic of Bantu identity than of national or regional identity, and there is resistance to being culturally assimilated. In addition, many see the continued organizational value of English for higher education, modern technology, and international trade and communication. As Kenya, in contrast to Tanzania, has pursued a capitalistic as well as democratic program for national development, this last point has high salience for Kenya's role as a major center for international exchange (including, for example, being host country to the United Nations and several other donors that serve all of East and Southern Africa).

In Uganda Swahili continues to be seen as organizationally useful, but does not seem to have any value yet for forging

national identity. In fact its potentia for regional unification within East Africa is sometimes seen as antithetical to Ugandan national interests.

It is possible to see these contrasts as a kind of progressive development, with the continuing growth of Swahili being driven by both organizational and inspirational associations in Tanzania, by some organizational and some inspirational associations in Kenya, and by primarily organizational associations in Uganda.

In all three countries there is unstable multilingualism based on rapid social change--reflecting both the changing needs of the societies and the changing linguistic repertoires of individuals (including here, especially, education end literacy levels, end exposure to other languages). As Swahili acquires more speakers, and urbanization increases (as a result of both economic development and population pressures), certain interpersonal domains of usage are opened to Swahili--mother-tongue (and occasionally English) bilingualism, while other more formal and official domains of usage are opened to Swahili-English bilingualism. In association with this there is a certain amount of "language mixing" or code-switching within the sentence unit. There does not seem any likelihood of Swahili and English forming anything like a new pidgin or creole, although, among certain age cohorts (around the teenage years of secondary school end early

university education) in Nairobi, there is a fairly well-developed kind of slang called Sheng, which is used as a kind of age-specific "secret" language, and which clearly involves a mixing of English and occasionally other foreign words into the basic Swahili syntax.

In Kenya especially, where economic development is taking place most rapidly, both Swahili and English seem to be acquiring speakers. Impressionistically, there seems to be a tendency for what might be thought of as "dimodal diglossia" for many speakers in some domains, whereby English is more preferred for reading and especially writing, while Swahili is more preferred for oral communication. This does not seem to be a straightforward official-unofficial or formal-informal splitting. For example, broadcasts and public speeches are increasingly presented in Swahili, while bilinguals often seem to prefer English language newspapers.

The aesthetic and formally expressive uses of languages present a more complex situation, especially since mother-tongue literacy is fairly recent and since many of the traditional Swahili literary genres--those that were associated with the Arabic script and the Islamic religion--were not adopted with the general spread of Swahili as a lingua franca. Many creative literary genres were basically adopted along with the acquisition of English, but since independence these are often questioned,

altered, and even abandoned (see p'Bitek 1973, Gachukia 1986, Wanjala 1981). For example, intellectual concern over producing Kenyan literature in English and western European language genres has led to the important inclusion of oral literature in the university curriculum and the writing of some works in mother-tongues. In Kenya, following the lead of Tanzania, literature in the creative genres of novels, stories, and poetry is now being written by both native and non-native speakers.

It is now scarcely a generation since Kenya, Tanzania, and Uganda became independent nations. The situation is highly complex and changing. Nevertheless, we speculate in concurrence with the recent statement by Abdulaziz (1985): "For the foreseeable future, Swahili is likely to gain ground all the time as it emerges as a true national lingua franca of the three East African countries. English, for a long time, will have a secure established place as the language of education and international communication. In Uganda and Kenya the mother tongues may receive more attention but they are unlikely to develop functions outside intra-ethnic communication."

NOTE: (1) For much of the historical discussion a synthesis has been drawn from several of the works listed in the bibliography that are not individually cited.

(2) Since this paper was written (February 1986) both the authors have attended a conference on English in East Africa, and Abdulaziz has also attended a conference on Standardization of African languages and on scientific and technical terminology

within the region. These recent discussions with other colleagues have corroborated the basic ideas presented in this paper, and also have indicated that, perhaps because Swahili is an indigenously African language, there is an increasingly lively interest in its spread and development.

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